

DIVISION: FORMS 1 - 4AGE GROUP: 12 plusSERIES: CURRENT AFFAIRSPROGRAMME (10) "The Ceremonial Opening of the House of Assembly"RECORDING TIME:TRANSMISSION: Wednesday, 31st March, 1965 (2.46 - 2.58 p.m.)

NARR: Hello boys and girls,

I'm sure that many of you have seen the Public Buildings in Georgetown. And if you haven't seen it - I'm sure you've all seen photographs of it. It's a very stately building - if you've visited it, I don't doubt that the two old cannons in the court-yard have caught your eyes. But it's not only the beauty of the Public Buildings or the two old cannons that make it very important. There's something far more interesting about the Public Buildings - A very important body of people meet there. Do you know what that body of people is called? Well if you said the House of Assembly, you'd be quite right. In the large room on the Eastern End of the building - there the people's representatives meet to discuss and argue about what's good for Guiana.

Now on Monday morning there were crowds of people around the Public Buildings and many people inside the court-yard too. If you had been there to look at what was going on, you would have seen the Prime Minister and his wife going into the building - all the Cabinet Ministers and all the elected members of the People's National Congress and the United Force.

/And then.....

And then finally you would have seen the Governor arrive. Well what was going on? I think that's easy to answer - it was the ceremonial opening of the House of Assembly. But why does the House of Assembly have to have a "cermonial" opening? Let's have a look at this question for a moment. Well first of all the Assembly is the most important body of people in our ~~centry~~ ^{Country}. As you know the members of the Assembly are the people's representatives - they were elected last December to speak for the people. So the Assembly has very great powers. The Prime Minister is a member of the Assembly and the Members of the cabinet are too. And the Government of the country can only go on if the largest number of people in the Assembly give it their support.

Well now if the Assembly is such a very important body then it must have some signs of its importance. Something that everybody can see to remind them of its importance. You see boys and girls in almost every country of the world the most important bodies - whether they are called Parliaments, Assemblies, Congress, Senates - all these bodies have certain ways of showing how important they are. And perhaps the most ~~normal~~ way is by having ceremonies - sometimes they are very simple - sometimes they are very colourful and elaborate.

You can say it this way: Ceremonies are a way ^{telling people things without using words} of using words. Well let's see now if this answers our question - Why did the Legislative Assembly have a ~~ceremonial~~ ^{Ceremonial} opening? Yes it's because, as we said, the Ceremonial opening reminds everybody in the country of what an important job the

/Assembly has.....

Assembly has to do. Let's take an example of one of the ceremonies that always ^{goes} ~~going~~ on at the opening of Assembly. You may have seen a picture in the papers of the Governor "reviewing the Troops" - you know what that means - he walks around them and inspects them. But what does this little ceremony tell us? It tells us that the Army - the military men - are under the control of the head of the country - who is the Governor - and must obey the laws of the land and carry out the people's wishes. So you see, behind ^{all} ~~the~~ the colour of the military ^{uniforms} ~~uniforms~~ and the music something very serious is being ^{said} ~~said~~.

OPR: But-we--haven't-yet- MUSIC BREAK

NARR: But we haven't yet dealt with the most important part of the ceremonial opening. Can you tell me what that is? You would be quite right if you said the Governor's speech - which by the way, is called the Speech from the Throne. Let's see why. Since Guyana is not yet an independent country, the Queen of England is still our chief ruler. Now in England at the ^{opening} ~~opening~~ of a new session of Parliament the Queen herself reads a speech to the members of the House of Lords and the House of Commons from her throne. That is how this speech got its name.

Of course, the speech is never written by the Queen, but it is written by the members of the elected Party which is running the Government. And from that speech everybody in England gets a pretty good idea of what the Government is going to do for the next five years. So everybody listens very carefully to the speech from the Throne.

Well very much the same thing happened in Guyana on Monday morning. When the Governor who is the Queen's Representative arrived in the Assembly he moved towards the Throne and the speech he read was given to him by the Prime Minister, the Hon'ble Forbes Burnham. In the speech were all the plans that the Government has for the country. plans for development - Road building, Education, Labour, Health - the whole lot. And just as in England, the Queen's speech is prepared by the Cabinet, so too the Governor's speech was prepared by the Ministers of our Cabinet, and not the Governor. And there is an interesting thing about this speech. If you listened to it you might have heard the Governor saying "~~as~~ my Government thinks this", "my Government intends to do this". And you know what's behind this? Just as in England the Queen always acts on the advice of ^{her} ~~his~~ Ministers, so in Guyana the Governor nearly always acts on the Advice of the Ministers of the Government. It also means that what ever Government is in power the Governor has to call it "my Government".

Well at the end of the Speech from the Throne the Governor was thanked by the Speaker of the House and then he left. When he left, the House of Assembly settled down to do its business and of course the Chairman of all the debates is the Speaker. And here again the ceremony tells you something. The Governor leaves because it is not his job to govern the country so much as to do what his Ministers advise him. When they have finished discussing a law and the majority of members vote for it - then **it** goes to the governor and he signs it - and so it becomes the law.

/So you see.....

So you see boys and girls, why there was a ceremonial opening of the Assembly. The ceremonies ^{said} ~~and~~ a number of things which have become the normal way of running the Government. And you should look out for other ceremonies that come with great public events - and try to see if you can find the meanings behind them.

Well this is your last programme in Current Affairs.
So Goodbye until next term.

OPR:

PLAY THEME: